

REMARKS

Claims 2 – 7, 9, 11-24, and 26 - 29 are pending and under consideration in the above-identified application and Claims 1, 8, 10 and 25 were previously cancelled.

In the Office Action, Claims 2 – 7, 9, 11-24, and 26 - 29 were rejected.

In the Amendment, Claims 5, 7, 9, 11, 15 – 18, 22 – 24, and 27 – 29 are amended. Independent Claims 9, 11 and 18 are amended to recite that the document is completed by more than one user in a way that each user provides predetermined non-signature information associated with a corresponding part of the document. Support for this amendment may be found throughout the specification and specifically on pages 10 – 12. No new matter has been introduced as a result of this Amendment.

Accordingly, Claims 2 – 7, 9, 11-24, and 26 – 29 are at issue.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants would like to note that the changes to the claims were made solely for the purpose of more particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention.

I. Interview Summary

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to Applicants' agent, Kader Gacem, in expediting the schedule for an interview and for the interview held on October 20, 2008.

During the interview, Applicants' agent and the Examiner discussed the rejections under 35 U.S.C § 103(a). The Examiner and Applicants' agent discussed independent Claim 9.

With respect to claim 9, Applicants' agent indicated that the claimed method of interactive processing of a document enables each user to receive and respond to requests to provide non-signature information for only corresponding determined parts of the selected document. In contrast, in addition to the previously cited references to Slater and Yankovich, the newly cited reference to Conant et al. teaches that a user is allowed to edit entries into the document made by another user.

In response, the Examiner indicated that she understands this distinction between the claimed invention and the references, and suggested that Applicants amend the claims to reflect this distinction.

II. Double Patenting

Claims 9, 11 and 18 were provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 8 and 10 of copending Application No. 11/172,743.

Without acquiescing in the merits of the rejection, Applicants reserve the right to file an appropriate Terminal Disclaimer upon the issuance of the copending application. The rejection thus has been overcome.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Obviousness Rejection of Claims 1-6, 9, 11, and 13-15

Claims 2-7, 9, 11-24, and 26 – 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Slater et al.* (“*Slater*”) (U.S. Patent No. 6,796,489) in view of *Yankovich et al.* (“*Yankovich*”) (U.S. Patent No. 6,704,906) further in view of *Conant et al.* (“*Conant*”) (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0129056). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Slater is directed to systems and methods for processing or recording electronic documents that have embedded digital signatures, *Yankovich* is directed to a self-directed routable electronic form generation system and method where each user in the process defines the next user, or all subsequent user routing, and *Conant* is directed to method and apparatus for electronic negotiation of a content of a document.

The Examiner acknowledged that a combination of *Slater* and *Yankovich* may not be explicit as to editing and inputting of non-signature information by the second user, but asserted that *Conant* teaches that the second user can negotiate and amend the document (contract) proposed by the first user.

As remarked by Applicants in the previous response submitted on July 16, 2008, both *Slater* and *Yankovich* fail to teach or suggest that the non-signature information received from the second user is independent of the non-signature information obtained from the at least one response from the first user. Further, as indicated by the Examiner, *Conant* teaches in at least paragraphs [0019] and [0020] that the second user can amend the document proposed by the first user. That is, in *Conant* the second user is not limited

to providing non-signature information to only a second part of the selected document that is distinct from a first part selected for completion by the first user, as required by claim 1.

Therefore, all three cited references fail to fairly teach or suggest that the first user is requested to provide non-signature information to complete a first part of the document and a second user is requested to provide non-signature information to complete a second part of the document.

Thus, independent claims 9, 11 and 18 are patentable over *Slater, Yankovich, and Conant*, either alone or in any known combination.

Claims 2-7, 12- 18, 19 – 24, and 26 – 29 depend, directly or indirectly, from one of the independent claims 9, 11 or 18. As discussed above, because claims 9, 11 and 18 are patentable over the three cited references, therefore, claims 2-7, 12- 18, 19 – 24, and 26 – 29 are also patentable over the three cited references, for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that these claim rejections be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above Amendment and Remarks, Applicants submit that Claims 2-7, 9, 11-24, and 26 – 29 are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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